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SERVICE

NEWS

ISSUED FOR THE STAFF OF THE SOIL CONSERVATION
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U. S. Department of Agriculture

No 31

WASHINGTON • CORRESPONDENT

Right now, while supervisors are busy making out efficiency ratings, we believe you will be interested in knowing how these ratings are determined under the new system

As we have said before, the new efficiency rating system is uniform throughout the Government, for the first time since the system was started. The committee which wrote the new manual has tried to take out all the bugs in the system, and they have worked particularly to eliminate a difference in rating standards so that all sections, divisions, bureaus, and departments will rate like jobs in a like manner with the personal element pretty much eliminated. You remember the old cry that some supervisors gave high ratings and others rated too low. Under the new system there is not much chance for that kind of thing to happen.

Maybe we can explain better if we take an imaginary case. John Doe is rating Mary Smith, CAF-2, junior clerk typist. Supervisor Doe first looks over the rating sheet on which are listed 31 phrases which are descriptive of important elements for all kinds of Government jobs. From this list Doe selects and underlines the elements which he thinks are especially im-

portant for a junior clerk typist job. He is not thinking of Mary Smith now, but he is considering what qualifications all clerk typists need in order to do good work. And those same elements will be used in rating every clerk typist under his supervision.

Now let us say that supervisor Doe decides from the rating sheet that the elements especially important for the clerk-typist position are item 4, presentability of work; 6, attention to pertinent detail; 11, industry; 13, amount of acceptable work produced; and 19, dependability. All right, he underscores those elements on the rating sheet.

Now he is ready to consider Mary Smith. Is Mary Smith's work presentable? In describing Mary's work, Doe must select one of the three standards of rating--outstanding, adequate, or weak. (According to the manual, "outstanding" is described as distinctly better than what would be expected, after a reasonable period of training, of a fully competent, qualified, acceptable employee in the same kind and level of work; "adequate" is what would be expected of a fully competent employee, etc.; and "weak" indicates work is not what would be expected of a competent employee, etc.)

Let us say that Doe decides Mary's work is "adequate." He therefore places a check mark in front of item 4 on the rating sheet. He is now ready to rate Mary's ability on the next important element of her job--attention to pertinent detail. Perhaps he thinks Mary is out-

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CONSERVATION TIPS ON SOYBEANS AND PEANUTS

The Secretary has called for a 54% increase in the soybean crop and a step-up of 155% in peanut production. Since soybeans and peanuts are both erosion-inducing crops, farmers are going to need a lot of help this year to increase production sufficiently and keep their soil where it belongs. Right here is where SCS can do a great good for the farmers and the Food-for-Freedom campaign.

We know from sad experience that when you lose a lot of soil by growing clean-cultivated crops year after year on the same land, production goes way down. However, we have learned during the last few years that conservation measures can mean not only an increase in production but a way to sustain and increase that increase.

Fortunately our research technicians have the answers for the farmers who want to prevent soil losses while they are growing the crops our country needs most. During the last ten years our research men have tested yields of almost every crop we grow. They are ready to tell us how to increase production now and keep it up.

The research men have found out that contouring can increase the yields of soybeans on sloping land. At Columbia, Bethany, and McCredie, Mo., it was found that soil and water losses from soybeans drilled solid were much less than where planted in rows and cultivated. The soil loss from soybeans drilled solid on terraced land and on the contour at Bethany for a ten-year period averaged 2.12 tons, a rate which would require about 500 years to remove 7 inches of soil.

They found out that another good practice was to leave the crop residues on the ground. Since most soybeans are harvested with combines, the straw can be kept on the ground. Wherever the beans can be harvested early, enough small grain or

some winter growing legume, such as vetch, should be planted to provide additional cover and keep plant food from being leached out by winter and early spring rains.

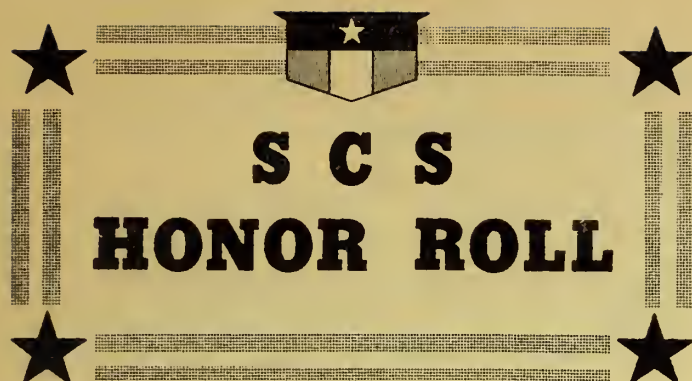
The proposed big increase in peanut acreage also presents an erosion and production problem. While much of the increased acreage will be on level or slightly sloping land, the great increase in the crop will require the use of considerable land with steep slope.

Fortunately, market peanuts are harvested early enough so that winter legumes--such as blue lupine, Austrian winter peas, or vetch--can be planted for winter cover. Unless peanuts are followed by a winter cover crop, the land is left unprotected against erosion, since the entire plant is harvested when peanuts are dug. As peanuts need an abundance of organic matter in the soil, it is desirable to plant winter legumes on land where peanuts are to be planted the following spring.

Like cotton and corn, peanuts are planted in rows and cultivated clean. Frequent, shallow cultivation is given until the vines occupy the greater portion of the ground. Planting on the contour, therefore, is an essential conservation practice for peanuts as well as for other row crops.

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A special study of conservation measures for peanuts is being made in South Carolina, according to State Coordinator Ernest Carnes, and farmers will be advised of practices that can be used to conserve the soil on peanut land following this year's crop and before the 1943 crop is planted. Right now Carnes is advising farmers to plant the peanut crop on the contour in order to retard run-off water and reduce the loss of soil.



Service News has received word of the death of two former employees who were serving with their country's armed forces. No doubt there will be other SCS men who will die in this world conflict. To give recognition as best we can to the supreme sacrifice which these men have made, Service News is setting up an honor roll to their memory.

J. Ray McCorkle, formerly assistant agricultural engineer at Montrose, Colo., was killed in action in the Philippine Islands on Jan. 30. He had been serving in the army since July 1, 1941.

Noel A. Brown, formerly junior range examiner at Midland and Big Spring, Tex., died February 26 when his plane crashed at Jones Field, Tex. He had volunteered in the air corps and had reported for training in December 1941.

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

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standing in this element, and he marks a plus before item 6. Down the list he goes, judging each element of the job.

After he has completed rating the especially important elements, there may be some other things he wishes to report about Miss Smith. For instance, he may have noted that Mary takes particularly good care of her typewriter, that she is particularly cooperative, but she doesn't have much initiative. These elements have not been considered especially important for a junior clerk-typist job, but they do mark Mary Smith as an individual on the job. So Doe gives Mary a plus for "main-

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tenance of equipment" and "cooperativeness" and a minus for "initiative."

Doe is now ready to determine an adjective and numerical rating for Mary. So that no personal bias may influence him, this part of the rating procedure has also been carefully worked out for him. Any deviations from the standards set up must be explained by Doe on the back of the rating sheet.

Doe reads that when "all underlined elements marked plus and no element marked minus," the adjective rating is "excellent" and the numerical rating is 1. That description does not fit Mary's case, so he reads further. "A majority of underlined elements marked plus, and no element marked minus" indicates a "very good" rating and numerical rating of 2 or 3. That still does not describe Mary's case. "All underlined elements marked at least with a check, and minus marks fully compensated by plus marks, or--a majority of underlined elements marked at least with a check, and minus marks on underlined elements over-compensated by plus marks on underlined elements"--now that description fits Mary's case. Then she should have an adjective rating of "good" and a numerical rating of 4, 5 or 6. Since four of the five important elements were marked with checks and only one with a plus sign, and because she has no minus marks in these important elements, Doe selects the middle grade--5--for Mary. After he signs the rating sheet, Doe is ready to rate the next employee.

This same procedure will be used for all employees in every type of work, in every grade, both clerical and professional, on up and including the chiefs.

We hope this explanation will give some idea of the care and thought which is being put in the preparation of efficiency ratings. In another issue we want to talk about how these ratings can be helpful in promoting a more efficient working organization.

POST OFFICE MURAL TELLS SOIL CONSERVATION STORY

In selecting a subject for a mural to be placed in the new post office at Bethany, Mo., a committee of businessmen, including Postmaster Walter Bartlett, and J. E. Noll, vice-president of Friends of the Land, chose to depict the changes in the agriculture of Harrison County brought about through the work of the Soil Conservation Service.

Dating from 1930, when the Soil Conservation Experiment Station was established near Bethany, soil conservation work has produced a gradual change in the agricultural picture of the county. The mural shows both the ravages of erosion and the application of conservation practices.

Prominent among soil conservation practices shown in the picture is the farmer plowing a field on the contour. In the background, a son is spreading the limestone from a spreader hitched to the rear of a wagon. In another field to the left, terraces are shown as ribbons winding around the uneven contour of the land.

Raw gullies are in evidence in a center field to illustrate the practice of farming a piece of land to depletion. A farm pond, built below the gullies in this field, helps control erosion and supplies water for livestock. To make it as near actual conditions as possible, some up-and-down hill farming is shown in the background on either side of the farmstead. Chickens, sheep, and cattle, which are so much a part of this community today, occupy various spots in the picture, as do trees and shrubs.

J. P. Vorst, the St. Louis artist who painted the mural, came to Bethany last April to take pictures for use in making his original sketch. Most of the scenes were taken at the Soil Conservation Experiment Station and local citizens posed

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FARMERS WANT TO KNOW ABOUT INCENDIARY BOMBS

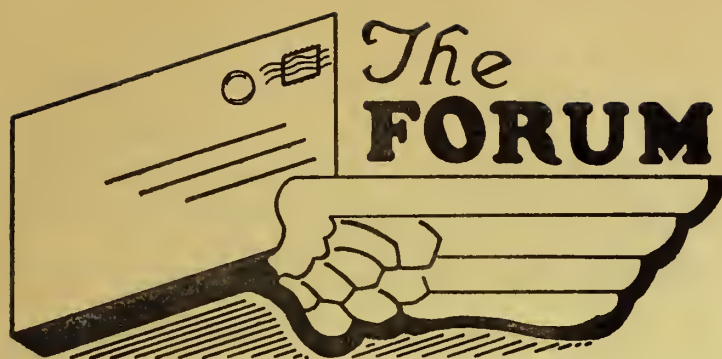
In response to request from the field for information about incendiary bombs and methods of combatting them--because there seems to be little or no information available in rural areas--Service News will publish some short articles on the subject. The subject matter has been furnished by information specialist Bill Pryor, who is a volunteer air raid warden and quite an authority on incendiaries.

The incendiary bomb which is most likely to be used in rural areas is known as the "scatter type." It consists of a small square of cardboard or celluloid about 4" x 4" to which is affixed a small piece of white phosphorus which, in turn, is covered with wet cloth.

The outstanding property of phosphorus is that when dry it will burn freely and upon exposure to the air without being lighted but when it is moist or wet it can not burn. These scatter type incendiaries have been dropped by planes during the war in Europe in order to set fire to grain fields and to forests. They are carried in the plane in water and, of course, are wet when dropped, thus they may land at the edge of a field or in shrubbery and lie there for some days before drying out. However, when the piece of linen or other cloth which holds the phosphorus to the cardboard or celluloid becomes dry the phosphorus immediately bursts into flame and you can guess what happens if nobody is there to take care of things when it ignites.

Since these squares are quite small it is difficult to combat them effectively if they are used in any quantity. However their incendiary value is rather low and once they start burning they are easy to locate since white phosphorus, when burning, emits dense clouds of white smoke. This smoke is not harmful. It may be

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

About 100,000 district cooperators have registered for a soil conservation program. Schedules outlining work required, sequence, and other requirements have been planned and signed. The installations are in all stages of completion. The freshman group, the newcomers and those doing first year work, are enthusiastic about their new courses. Many are doing sophomore work. Some may be juniors or seniors. The proportion of upper classmen is small and graduation has never received any special recognition. Can we expect registrants to "stick with the grind" and complete requirements when they are not distinguished from those who "flunk"?

After the initial orientation and registration exercises enthusiasm begins to fade. It is harder to become sophomores than freshmen, juniors than sophomores, or seniors than juniors. Mortality increases along the line. Adequate individual coaching and tutoring is no longer practical. Group action has helped to bolster the determination to follow through, but group action alone does not seem to be enough. The need for more tools of this kind, to reduce mortality, challenges the resourcefulness of all technicians.

Won't formal graduation provide another useful tool? Periodic (probably annual) district exercises could be held at which standard degrees, titles, or other appropriate recognition could be conferred by district supervisors upon all cooperators qualifying for graduation. Special scholarships might designate outstanding merit. Qualification for graduation or successful

completion of all practices could be certified by district technicians. Local leaders might also be given special recognition (Ph. D.?) upon completion of work with all group members. Local communities could wine and dine their graduates and even place their pictures in the newspapers.

This climax should harmonize with and reinforce established procedures. It really provides the grand finale for group action as well as incentive which has been absent in the past. Distinction is an incentive to complete commitments. Annual activities keep districts together and in the foreground.

Last, but not least, the psychological effect should pay good soil conservation and production dividends. With this handy terminology, progress and results could be checked more effectively. The district governing bodies could count the graduates instead of the plans. Progress of upper and lower classmen might also be recorded. Competition would stimulate districts and farmers to devise further ways and means so that the number of their graduates would top the list. It has worked in other programs (colleges, lodges, 4-H clubs, etc.), so why not in ours?

C. L. H.

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RHODE ISLAND'S "DUST BOWL"

Did you know that Rhode Island has a "dust bowl"? The story of how top soil on the move is threatening Rhode Island's potato lands was featured in an article appearing in the February 25 issue of the Providence (R.I.) Evening Bulletin. In the article, L. R. Albright of SCS is quoted as saying that the severe wind erosion is the result of two factors; an exceedingly dry fall coupled with a shortage of labor that delayed harvesting so long until it was too late to plant cover crops.

THESE SCS MEN NOW WEAR UNIFORMS OF ARMED FORCES

Here is the continuation of the list, printed partially in the last issue of Service News, of the SCS men who have been granted military furloughs since war was declared.

Titles have been given where such information was furnished to Washington.

Region II (Cont.) Jackson W. Payne; Edgar L. Fewitt, Aviation Cadet; Harold D. Prichard; Burkitt G. Read; Elisha G. Richards; John L. Robison, Aviation Cadet; Miguel J. Rodriguez, 2nd Lt. Inf-Res; Robert E. Ryan; Harry L. Schwartz; William N. Sharp, Jr., 1st Lt. FA-Res; Frederick E. Shelton; Ambrose H. Skardon, 1st Lt. Inf-Res; George Burwell Smith; Fraser Stephens; Paul L. Swecker; Lemuel H. Verner; Thomas L. Waters; Howard J. Williams; Samuel H. Williams, 1st Lt. FA-Res; William G. Williams; William C. Young, 1st Lt. FA-Res; Stephen J. Zayach.

Region III: Donald McG. Anderson; James W. Cavender; Harold N. Ellen; Dulaney L. O'Roark; James H. Rhoads; Paul E. Young.

Region IV: Roy W. Almdale, 2nd Lt. FA-Res; John M. Antonich; Donald W. Aultman; Bernard F. Berry; Robert P. Boswell; Noel A. Brown; Richard D. Butts, Capt. Inf-Res; L. Claude Chessmore; Warren E. Church; Henry Lamar Clark; Paul Copeland, 2nd Lt. Inf-Res; Alvin J. Curole; Walter M. Daggett, 1st Lt. Inf-Res; James B. Dickinson; Carl F. Eminger; Ivan D. Eyler, 1st Lt. Inf-Res; Donald W. Hedrick; Robert W. Henslee; John W. Herring, Jr., 1st Lt. Inf-Res; Ralph W. Hippen; Wesley E. Jacoby; J. Donovan Larson; Louis J. Lioux, Jr.; Harold D. Lynn; Lewis H. Marshall; Lewis G. Mathieu, 2nd Lt. FA-Res; Ralph W. Oneal; Alfred L. Pace, 2nd Lt. FA-Res; Clifford G. Powell; Robert H. Rea, 1st Lt. FA-Res; Charles E. Rice, 2nd Lt. Cav-Res; Walter

L. Robert, 1st Lt. Inf-Res; N. D. Scarborough; Elbert D. Scott; Howard Schulte; Henry Steinkamp, Jr.; Martin W. Steward; Ralph Tatum, Jr.; Henry W. Turney, 1st Lt. Inf-Res; Joe L. White.

Region V: George D. Carroll; Marion F. Ebert; Richard C. Kellar, 2nd Lt. FA-Res; Harold O. Krueger; John Lautenschlager; Milo D. Moyer; Norman E. Schweichel; Rex J. Taylor; David R. Thomas.

Region VI: Earl J. Bondy; Theodore Bettis Coffield; Vaughn E. DeGeer, Jr.; Paul J. Gleason, 1st Lt. FA-Res; Donald M. Miller; Fred H. Muret; Rodney E. Newton; E. Allen Nottorf; Karl R. Stockinger; Loren E. Thompson; Wayne Tolley; Carl R. Ward.

Region VII: James H. Aduddell; John A. Allis, 1st Lt. FA-Res; Frank W. Baxter; Charles P. Beard; Harold A. Buran; Merritt D. Burdick; John A. Clymer; Warren W. W. Dutton; George J. Goldenziel; Lowell M. Graves, 1st Lt. Inf-Res; Allen B. Morton; Howard S. Nelson; Sheryl A. Nicholas; Ganis J. Richmond; Kenneth J. Sire; E. Malcolm Strom; Cleo A. Treadwell, 1st Lt. Quartermaster Corps Reserve; John W. Wolfe, 2nd Lt. Inf-Res.

Region VIII: William H. Atkinson, 2nd Lt. Inf-Res; Wallace C. Eder, 2nd Lt. Inf-Res; Gordon Hansen, 1st Lt. FA-Res; Robert G. Hardgrave, Jr., 1st Lt. Inf-Res; Morlan W. Nelson, 2nd Lt. Inf-Res; Leon J. Sorensen; Albert J. Webber, 1st Lt. CA-Res.

Region IX: Kenneth A. Bell, 2nd Lt. CW-Res; Elaine L. Bishop; Raymond J. Boyd; Robert G. Casteel; Kenneth Croeni; Wilbur F. Currier; Walter J. Kennelly; Robert C. Leigh; Robert C. Linkhart, 2nd Lt. Inf-Res; G. Raymond Meyers, Aviation Cadet.

Region X: F. DeWitt Abbott, Morris Dreizen, Bradley B. Garretson, Robert G. Humes, Harry I. Irvin, William P. Lucas, James N. Luthin, Arthur E. Miller, Benjamin W. Fower, Austin D. Warnken.

FIELD MEMORANDA

- 740-B Payroll transfers on personnel details. (FM 740 and 740-A amended to authorize payroll transfers between all locations within a region on approved personnel details not to exceed 120 days.)
- 1043-C (1) Occupational deferments (2) Reserve officers. (1-Defines Classes II-A and II-B under Selective Service Regulations. 2-Advises War Department will no longer defer reserve officers in key positions and explains special circumstances under which such officers may be permitted to resign their commissions.)
- 913-C Amendment to Civil Service Retirement Act approved January 24, 1942. (Sums up new retirement provisions which include increase to 5% contributions after July 1, 1942, optional retirement at 60 and 62 years, etc.)
- 872-E Political activity. (Sums up all regulations issued by USDA in regard to political activities and supplants all previous regulations.)
- 1058 Reassignment of key personnel. (Changes in assignment to better carry out SCS wartime program.)
- 1059 Service-wide policy on salary changes. (Person who is transferred, given a change of status, or reinstated will be paid a rate of salary in accordance with Comptroller General's decision interpreting the Mead-Ramspeck Act.)
- 1060 Granting of easements and similar interests in Title III lands. (Outlines policies and procedures for granting of easements.)

DAVIS TO REVIEW WAR WORK

Arnold Davis has been designated by the Chief to make a review of all SCS activities which relate directly to the national war effort and to keep the ACAA Administrator and the Office of Agricultural Defense Relations currently informed of such activities. Mr. Davis should be notified of all future requests for Service assistance made by the various armed services and other war agencies.

ABOUT INCENDIARY BOMBS

(Continued from page 4)

slightly irritating to the throat but produces no other ill effects.

There are several ways to deal with white phosphorus. One is to let it burn out, protecting the surrounding area from igniting. Another way is to pick up--with tweezers or some other instrument--the burning phosphorus and plunge it into a bucket of water. It will stop burning when wet. Care should be taken in handling phosphorus because a small piece can burn entirely through a man's hand.

We'll tell you about other types of bombs in next issue of Service News.

POST OFFICE MURAL

(Continued from page 4)

in the pictures. Perry Funk, a CCC camp cooperator living near the experiment station, furnished the "Missouri" mules.

Z. R. Mills, a member of the citizens committee and chairman of the unveiling ceremonies, stated to the group that gathered on Sunday afternoon, January 18: "The mural shows the progress we have made in Harrison County to date. Let us hope that this painting will serve as an incentive to all the people who see it to contribute their part toward the conservation of the agricultural land in this great nation of ours."

PRINTERS' INK

"Early Contributions to Mississippi River Hydrology" by C. S. Jarvis, hydraulic engineer at Washington, in March *Proceedings of the American Society of Civil Engineers*.

"Infiltration Studies in the Pecos River Watershed, New Mexico and Texas" by Hilliard L. Smith and Luna B. Leopold, associate soil scientist and assistant agricultural engineer at Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the March *Soil Science*.

"Grow Herbs to Spice Your Dinner" by William Clayton Pryor, information specialist at Washington, in the April *Better Homes and Gardens*.

"God Intended Horses to Work" by Angus McDonald, information specialist at Washington, in the March *Country Life*.

"Soil Movement Within the Surface Profile of Terraced Lands" by A. W. Zingg, assistant agricultural aide at Bethany, Mo., in the March *Agricultural Engineering*.

"Improved Row System for Terraced Fields" by T. L. Copley, project supervisor at Raleigh, N. C., in the March *Agricultural Engineering*.

"Drainage as a Conservation Practice" by Lewis A. Jones, chief of Farm Drainage Division, in the March *Agricultural Engineering*.

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"Plant Mulch and Other Soil Conservation Practices under Orchard Conditions" by J. T. Bregger, in charge of research, and J. B. Howie, scientific aide, both located at Clemson, S.C., will be published in the *43rd Annual Proceedings, Association of Southern Agricultural Workers-1942*.

OFF THE PRESS

"Measuring Water in Irrigation Channels" by R. L. Parshall. *Farmers' Bulletin* No. 1683.

Conservation folders Nos. 7 and 8, issued by Region 7, are available for distribution. Each folder of the series, under the general heading, "Save Your Soil", describes some practice that helps conserve soil and moisture resources. Folder No. 7 deals with "Establishing Grass on Unproductive Cultivated Land" and Folder No. 8 discusses "Stock Water Dams in the Northern Great Plains."

STOP TECHNICAL BULLETINS

For the duration of the war, SCS will cease publication of strictly technical bulletins and circulars which are not immediately useful in the USDA war production program, according to an announcement made by the Chief. During this period, says Dr. Bennett, SCS will depend upon non-governmental publications, such as scientific and professional journals, for the dissemination of this type of information.

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"Some Economic Considerations Involved in Planning Farms for Soil and Water Conservation at Wooster, Ohio" by R. H. Blosser, cooperative agent in Region 3, has been published by Ohio State University and the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station and is designated as Mimeograph Bulletin No. 147.

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Pictures of the farm belonging to Arthur Brown, member of the board of supervisors of the Lancaster County (PA.) soil conservation district, were featured in a story appearing in the March 14 issue of the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin and telling about "Filling Democracy's Larder".